

# Message to the men and women of American Armed Forces

**By Gen. Richard B. Myers**  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

On September 11th, 2001, terrorists murdered thousands of innocent men, women and children on American soil. The attack immediately plunged our Nation into a global war against terrorism. As part of our war to defend America, Operation Iraqi Freedom has begun.

The rulers of Iraq yield weapons of mass destruction and give support to international terrorists. America and our coalition partners are determined to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and destroy Iraq's safehaven for terrorists. In doing this, we will liberate the Iraqi people from the terror, torture and misery they have suffered under a brutal tyrant.

We have a sworn duty to protect and defend the United States. Taking the fight to the enemy has always been a key part of our military strategy. We will demonstrate to all that we fight not to impose our will, but to defend our freedom, and to extend that freedom

and hope to the Iraqi people. Not only are you fighting to protect American freedoms, but to prevent terrorism in a troubled region that threatens peace throughout the world.

As you enter this fight, be confident that you are well prepared, well trained, and well supported in the mission that lies ahead. Your families, your loved ones — indeed, your nation — stand united behind you. Take pride in the legitimacy and the necessity of your mission; show compassion for the lives this war will forever change; and rest assured the outcome is not in doubt.

I am proud of your sacrifice and service, and know you will perform your duty with the courage and distinction that comes from serving in the finest American fighting force ever. Whether you are serving on foreign shores or protecting our homeland, our country is depending on you.

I am honored to serve with you as



Photo by SSgt. Cherie A. Thurlby

**Operation Iraqi Freedom — An F-16 "Fighting Falcon" receives fuel from a tanker in the skies near Iraq on March 22.**

you carry freedom forward at this critical point in history. May God bless and protect each of you, your families, and the United States of America.

New Mexico Army National Guard

## Members of the 717th rescue two women, their pitbull

**By Maj. Kimberly Lalley**  
HQ/NMANG

Four members of the 717th Medical Company launched a UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopter at 7:15 a.m. Mar. 10 enroute to El Malpais National Monument located in Grants to rescue two women and their 55 pound pitbull. They were rescued by 8 a.m.

The hikers had spent the night lost and were cold and out of water. They started a fire making it easier for the helicopter crew to locate them. Maj. Mike Montoya and Chief Warrent Officer Guy Gleason piloted the aircraft, Staff Sgt. Steve Montoya and Sgt. Allen McBroom were the crew chiefs.

Staff Sgt. Steve Montoya descended on a jungle penetrator - a hoisting mechanism. The women were hoisted 40 feet up on the jungle penetrator. According to Gleason the first woman made it up without a hitch, the second tried to grab the dog and the height and noise terrified the pitbull who struggled and jumped down. The women were frantic that their dog would be left behind. To save the terrified dog the chopper hovered low at six feet and Staff Sgt. Montoya tossed the pet to Sgt. McBroom.